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The acorn barnacle cements its forehead to a rock and remains thus all its life with its head downward and its heels in the air, kicking its food into its mouth.

The existing cedars of Lebanon are only 900 years old. The cypress trees at Montezuma, Mexico, according to a French botanist, are 6,000 years old, and consequently he makes them out coeval with the creation of the world.

Silk first came from China, and the Chinese still have many important secrets connected with it unknown to Europeans. If a good year they send as much as \$25,000,000 worth of raw silk to England alone. The "hanks," or bobs, as they are called, arrive with hanks made of a single cocoon. This is done by a process unknown in Europe.

At a wedding in Frederick, Md., a little dog that was exceedingly ugly but had been the pet of the bride, and who was supposed to be safely locked up at home, marched up the aisle of the church just as the minister was about to begin the service. With a yelp he looked up in the face of his mistress and seemed to ask the meaning of all this. The dog then taking in the solemnity of the occasion, stretched himself out on the train of the bride's satin dress, and remained there until the marriage service was concluded.

A cunning Vermont fox has for several years defeated all attempts to capture him. A few weeks ago a man put a beef's head on the hill near London and set a trap near by. He soon saw fresh fox tracks, and put his hound to work. It was a lively chase, but the fox was too much for the dog, coaxing the dog over considerable territory, and at length toying back to the hill where the trap was set and jumping over it. But the dog put his foot in the trap and stopped right there, leaving the fox to go on.

The date tree requires not only abundant irrigation but great solar heat. The Arabs say that it stands with its feet in the water and its head in the fires of Heaven. The love of the Arab for this precious tree may well be imagined, growing as it does in the sand, contenting itself with water so saline as to destroy ordinary vegetation, giving a grateful shade when all around is burned up by the ardent heat of the summer, resisting the winds which bend but cannot break its flexible stem, and affording a fruit sought for in every part of the world.

The maltree, of course, bears no nut; it has merely a bunch of flowers enclosed, until maturity, with a spathe. The females have also bunches of flowers which, however, cannot become developed into fruit until fecundated by the motion of the male flower. To insure this result the Arabs ascend the tree in the month of April and insert into every female spathe a portion of the pollen of the male flower. The fruit then begins to swell and forms long clusters, weighing from twenty to forty pounds, each tree producing from 160 to 200 pounds in a season. To multiply the date tree the Arabs do not sow the seed, as they could not then be sure of the sex of the trees; they prefer to plant the suckers from the base of a female tree, whence the name "Phoenix," these become productive in about eight years, but do not attain full fruition before twenty or twenty-five. The trees are about forty-five feet high, and as they are planted very close together they afford a dense shade, in which, however, the air circulates freely, so that all kinds of fruit vegetables, etc., can be cultivated below them. The trees will live for about 200 years; they are not worth preserving after a century. When they are no longer valuable for fruit the sap is extracted to make a kind of insipid wine, and the heart or cabbage of the tree is also eaten. They are then cut down and the wood, although very inferior in quality, is here valuable, where no other kind can be procured. The roots are used for fencing and roofing, and the leaves are made into mats, baskets, sacks and cord.

Like all other species of cultivated plants, the date tree has numerous varieties. In the cases of the *Zipus*, seventy distinct varieties are recognized. The trees come into flower in spring, in March or April, and the fruit is ripe about October. The one is called the King of the Sahara, and is regarded as the most nutritious of fruits. Many of the Arabs live on dates and bread.

History of the Formation of the Scriptures.

It may help to an understanding of the work involved in revising the accepted text of the New Testament, says the Philadelphia *Times*, to recall the circumstances under which this collection of sacred writings had its origin. The history of the formation of what is technically known as the canon of the New Testament—that is, the collection of those writings that were accepted as of divine authority and the separation from them of other writings, even contemporaneous, that were not accepted—bears some points of resemblance to the long and gradual growth of the Old Testament canon. This, it will be remembered, was a process extending over centuries. After the return of the Jews from captivity, one of the first cares of Ezra and his associates was to collect, edit and transcribe, if not to translate, the Books of Moses—called in Hebrew, *Tora*, a landmark—known to us as the Pentateuch, or, from the Greek title afterward given them, “the Law.” After that an effort was made to gather together the various prophetic books, “the writings of the saints,” and in the course of time there was gradually formed the second part of the canon, which is referred to in the New Testament as “the Prophets.” Finally there were collected from the remaining body of Hebrew literature, both ancient and recent, a variety of sacred writings or “Hagiographa,” some of them used in the Temple service, some handed down by popular tradition, and some evidently compiled from various sources to complete the historic record. This group, which took its popular title from the leading division, “the Psalms,” was not closed until long after the Law and the Prophets. These were the three separate collections so often referred to by the sacred writers. The dates of the different books thus gathered together cover a period of at least 1,000 years, and there is no doubt that they were originally written in a great variety of dialects and characters. As finally transcribed and edited, however, they formed the sacred canon of the Jewish Church, in somewhat different order but substantially as we have them in our Bibles to-day. The whole of these sacred writings was translated into Greek, at Alexandria, by order of Ptolemy Philadelphus, by seventy-two learned men assembled for the purpose, and this version of “the seventy,” or the Septuagint, was the version that was familiar at the beginning of our era and that is commonly quoted in the New Testament.

The history of the New Testament does not extend over any such long period, but within its narrower limits the process was not dissimilar. The earliest of the Christian writings is supposed to have been the first general epistle of St. Peter, which was written some sixteen years after the formation of the Christian Church. After this St. Paul wrote his letter to the Galatians, those to the Thessalonians, and like messages to other churches that had been established through his preaching. Naturally these letters were highly prized, and no doubt they were handed about and copied, and as the number of them increased the churches in different cities would take pains to secure copies for their own use. It was not until those who had been the personal companions of our Lord on earth were growing old, and felt that it would be well to leave a permanent record of what they had seen and heard, that St. Matthew and St. Mark were moved to write the Gospel narratives that go by their names. St. Luke wrote his Gospel and his history of the Acts of the Apostles a little later, St. Paul having meanwhile added to the number of his disciples, and the several writings of St. John, the last survivor of the Apostles, were written last of all, the date assigned to his Gospel being near the end of the first century of our era. There is no record of the manner in which these various writings were circulated, but that they were very commonly circulated is evident in many ways. St. Peter, for example, alludes to the epistles of St. Paul as though they were known to his readers, and St. John plainly wrote his Gospel as a supplement to the others. In the writings of the early Fathers we begin to meet with references to the Gospel and to the apostolic discourses, and by the middle of the third century we hear of the New Testament as a collective body of sacred writings to be named beside the Old.


Still there was no authoritative action like that by which the Great Synagogue accepted or rejected and made up the Hebrew canon. By a gradual and natural process the extant Christian writings became divided into two classes—the “homologoumenoi,” which the universal tradition of all the churches accepted as authentic, and “antilegomenoi,” which were accepted by some or a majority, but not by all. Among the books which do not appear to have been at first universally accepted were the epistles of St. James and St. Jude, the later epistles of St. Peter and St. John, the epistle to the Hebrews and the Apocalypse, while some of the churches received as authoritative the epistles of Barnabas and Clement, the Shepherd of Hermas and some other books that were afterward discarded. The prominence given to the Christian writings in the persecution of Diocletian shows what importance they had then assumed, and it was during this period, no doubt, that the greatest efforts were made for their preservation. Long before the first General Council of Nicea, which formulated the Catholic creed of the Trinity, the Holy Gospels had been held in the utmost veneration alike by

private devotions and in the divine service, but as to the apostolic writings the canon had not been finally determined even at that time, and it was not until the third council of Carthage, in the year 397—which was not one of the great councils—that the last of the books of the New Testament as we now have it, reduced to the generally-accepted writings of the Apostles themselves, was first set forth complete by what may be called official authority. This was the period of St. Jerome, one of the greatest Biblical scholars of that or any time, who, partly by original translation and partly by revision and comparison of the various partial translations already existing—for by this time portions of the scriptures had been rendered into many tongues—made up that great Latin version of the whole Bible, the Vulgate, which became to the middle ages what the Septuagint has been to the Jews and the early Christians, and which has been the basis of all the early translations into modern languages. The English divines of 1611, who relied mainly on the Septuagint for the interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures, made use of such Greek texts of the New Testament as were accessible to them, but still they were helped greatly by the Vulgate. The considerable number of the early manuscripts that have since been brought to light have much enlarged the opportunities of modern scholarship to reach the exact meaning, if not the exact original text, of the apostolic writings; yet the result of the recent revision shows that, whatever verbal inaccuracies may have been introduced by successive generations of copyists, the Christian church has preserved and transmitted the body of the New Testament Scriptures through all these centuries with marvelous fidelity.

It seems strange that there are so many persons who say that they cannot drink milk without suffering from derangement of the digestive organs in consequence, although it is generally supposed that milk is the most perfect food known. It is a fact, however, that in some cases milk is not well tolerated by the system—it seems to undergo immediate coagulation in the stomach, and to form there a heavy, indigestible mass. For this reason a kind of milk-wine, made by the fermentation of milk after the addition of a small quantity of sugar, has been found very valuable in the treatment of some forms of dyspepsia and of nervous exhaustion. This preparation is known as "kumyss," and its nutritive value should be more widely known. As ordinarily sold it is quite an expensive article of diet, but it can easily be prepared at home by the following process, which furnishes an excellent product: Procure some strong bottles, preferably such as have the patent rubber corks and wires for retaining the contents under pressure—the quart bottles in which root beer is sold are excellent for the purpose. About six quarts should be prepared at one time. To each quart of fresh milk add an ounce of sugar and a piece of compressed yeast about the size of a pea. The bottles should be nearly filled with the mixture, and allowed to stand, uncorked, until the fermentation is well established, which will be the case in eighteen to twenty-four hours under favorable conditions. They should then be corked and placed in the cellar for a week or two, when the product is ready for use. The fermentation develops a small quantity of alcohol, but the peculiarity of the kumyss is that the caseine, instead of being coagulated in large lumps, more or less difficult to digest, is separated in a very finely divided condition, so that it can be readily assimilated by the weakest stomach. A similar preparation, made from mare's milk by the Tartars, has long been justly celebrated for its nutritive qualities, and it has been of much value in cases of consumption. Cow's milk, however, affords an excellent substitute. Those who desire a milk diet, and who cannot use the article in the ordinary way, would do well to adopt the suggestions of Dr. J. D. Trask, who states that warm milk can be taken without discomfort, when cold milk cannot be borne. He thinks we should regard milk more as an article of food than as a beverage. The saliva plays an important role in the process of digestion; but bread and milk eaten together are often swallowed before the saliva comes into use, and consequently the bread is not easily digested. Persons with weak stomachs should, therefore, eat the bread separately, and thoroughly mix it with the fluids of the mouth. Probably many persons who think they cannot use milk would find it a valuable food if taken at a temperature slightly above 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Experience has already proved this to be the fact in some cases, and the experiment is worthy of a trial.—*New York Times*.

The most forcible ideas are conveyed by short words. Crime sometimes does not look like crime, when it is set before us in the many folds of a long word. When a man steals, and we call it "defalcation," we know not if it is a blunder or a crime. If he does not tell the truth, and we are told it is a case of "prevarication," it takes us some time to know just what we should think of it. No man will ever cheat himself into wrong doing; nor will he be at a loss to judge of others, if he thinks and speaks of acts in clear, crisp terms. It is a good rule, if one is at a loss to know if an act is right or wrong, to write it down in short, straightout English—as it is written in that book which contains the best of English, the Bible.

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